

Teacher/missionary/pastor finds joy in the many ways to serve

Meet Our Priests

This week's featured priest:

Father
Dwight Birket

YEAR FOR PRIESTS



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Father Dwight Birket is a priest from the Diocese of Wichita. He has been pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Hoisington, and Holy Family Parish in Odin since 2007.

What was it that made you want to be a priest?

I grew-up in a family that was always involved in parish life and I attended Catholic grade school and high school in Wichita. It was in this environment that I was encouraged to consider the priesthood by my family, the sisters in school, and by the example of parish priests and priest teachers at Chaplain Kapaun High. In my senior year in high school I had to make some definite plans for the following year and the recurring thought of being a priest was strong enough for me to visit with the vocation director. The following fall I entered Salvatorian Seminary in St. Nazianz, Wisconsin, and began my nine year preparation for ordination.

Who encouraged you in your vocation?

I had a lot of great mentors, teachers, and friends over the years. It was my

classmates who were my strongest supporters during my years in the seminary. They continue to be so today along with the priests, sisters and dedicated laity I have served with over the years. I have found that same supportive spirit here in the Diocese of Dodge City.

What do you like most about being a priest?

What I have really liked about the priesthood is the many and varied ways there are to serve in the Church as a priest. Some of these have been as a teacher at Bishop Carroll High School, a missionary in Venezuela, a Newman Center Chaplain at Pittsburg State University, and as a pastor. I am always amazed at the challenges that have come my way and how the Lord keeps my life so interesting and so fulfilled. In each type of assignment I have been blessed to get to know and to work with such great people. I couldn't imagine doing anything else.

What has been one of the greatest challenges of your priesthood?

An ongoing challenge I have, and I think many people do, is keeping things in perspective in my life. It is easy to let

things get out of balance in life -- getting things done instead of prayer time or staying motivated to do the important things. It takes a lot of discipline, but as I get older it seems to get easier.

What has been one of the highlights, so far, of your priesthood?

I don't know if there is one particular highlight but I think the almost many opportunities to be a part of people's lives as I minister to the bereaved, the sick, those preparing for marriage and other sacraments, etc. I enjoy kidding around with all ages.

If you could take a vacation anywhere in the world, where would you go?

I do like to travel and have been to 24 countries. I visited Mexico several weeks ago. I do like to go to my little mobile home near Cheney Lake to relax.

What are your hobbies?

I don't know if you'd call it a hobby, but I do have a unique "interest." In 2003 I wrote a necrology for the Wichita Diocese entitled "Pioneer Priests on the Plains." I continue to update this volume by researching and writing biographies of deceased priests as needed.